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Van Woerkom Junior ROTC legislation signed into law

LANSING – Legislation that would clarify the law so schools could count their Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps classes as instructional time was signed into law Tuesday, announced Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, sponsor of the bill.

Senate Bill 77, now Public Act 41 of 2005, would waive the requirement that JROTC instructors have to be state certified in order for classes they teach to count towards instructional time. JROTC instructors, all of whom served in the military, are qualified to teach based on military standards.

“These classes are important for building character and values among young people,” said Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores. “This new law will help ensure that students have the opportunity to continue participating in the Junior ROTC program.”

The bill was introduced to address concerns raised by the White Cloud School District, which faced having to provide some Junior ROTC students with more classroom hours because their instructor was not a certified teacher. Muskegon High School also has a JROTC program.

For years, this type of instruction has been considered as instructional time. This practice was recently challenged, leaving the future of some programs in jeopardy. The new law makes it easier for schools to continue offering JROTC classes.

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